Designing Letters and Cards for Automated Processing

810

Quick Service Guide

Overview Letter-size mail (including postcards) meeting the applicable automation standards is entitled to automation rates. This Quick Service Guide summarizes the standards for mail with 100% delivery point barcodes and mail without barcodes processed on USPS optical character readers (OCRs).

Characteristics and Content (C810, C830, C840) Must meet all physical standards of C810.

Shape: rectangular. Aspect ratio from 1:1.3 to 1:2.5 (C810.2).

Dimensions:

Minimum: 3-1/2 inches high, 5 inches long, and either 0.007 inch thick *if not more than 4-1/4 inches high and 6 inches long;* or 0.009 inch thick *if more than 4-1/4 inches high or 6 inches long, or both.*

Maximum for cards at card rates: 4-1/4 inches high, 6 inches long, and 0.016 inch thick.

Maximum for letters and other cards: 6-1/8 inches high, 11-1/2 inches long, 0.25 inch thick.

Weight:

Not more than 2.5 ounces:
  Upgradable Presorted First-Class.
  Upgradable Standard Mail.

Weight:*

Not more than 3 ounces:
  Automation First-Class Mail.
  Automation Periodicals.
  Automation Standard Mail.
  Automation Enhanced Carrier Route Standard Mail.

* Exception: For "heavy" letter mail, the maximum weight is 3.4383 ounces for automation First-Class, automation Regular Periodicals, and barcoded Nonprofit Standard Mail; 3.3087 ounces for automation Standard Mail; and 3.3062 ounces for automation Enhanced Carrier Route. Heavy letters must be prepared in envelopes, bear a delivery point barcode under C840 and meet physical standards under C810.

Prohibitions:
- Polywrap, polybag, and shrinkwrap.
- Clasps, strings, staples, buttons, or protrusions that might impede or damage the mail or mail processing equipment (C810.3).

Other machinability standards:
- Regular shape, with adequate flexibility and rigidity (C810.5).
- Tabbing for self-mailers or pieces with open edges (see C810 or Quick Service Guide 811).

Pieces with delivery point barcodes must meet all standards in C840:
- Format of barcode bars (e.g., dimensions and spacing, C840.4).
- Minimum clearance around barcode for barcodes printed on a mailpiece or label: 1/8" on left and right sides; 1/25" above and below barcode.
- Placement of address block barcodes, lower right barcodes, or barcodes within a window: see reverse.
- Reflectance standards for barcode and portion of mailpiece on which barcode is printed (C840.5).
- Barcode clear zone on nonbarcoded pieces within a barcoded rate mailing (less than 15% for Preferred Periodicals and Nonprofit Standard Mail only): see reverse.

Pieces for OCR processing (upgradable and ZIP+4 mail) must meet all standards in C830:
- Return address located above OCR read area: see reverse.
- Delivery address located within OCR read area: see reverse.
- Delivery address machine-printed in a type readable by USPS OCRs (C830.2).
- Non-delivery printing or markings permitted within OCR read area only if positioned above delivery address lines (C830.1).
- Barcode clear zone required: see reverse.
- Address placement in window envelopes: see reverse.
- Reflectance standards apply to OCR read area, barcode clear zone, and ink used to print address information (C830).

This guide is an overview only. For the specific DMM standards applicable to this category of mail, consult the DMM sections referenced above and the general sections within each DMM module.

Physical Standards for Automation-Compatible Mail

Pieces Prepared for OCR Processing (C830)

Return Address: Never lower than 2-3/4" from bottom edge (C830.1).

Envelope Window: 1/8"—Minimum clear space separating address block from the edge of the address window; must remain when insert is moved to full limits in each direction within the envelope.

Address Line Skew: See C830.2.

Envelope Window: Bottom edge of address window must not extend more than 1/8" into the barcode clear zone (C830.4), therefore, no closer than 1/2" from the bottom edge of the envelope (C830.4).
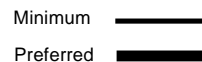
OCR Read Area: (gray box) All delivery address elements within OCR read area. The OCR read area is a rectangle formed by these dimensions:
- 1/2" from left and right edges of mailpiece.
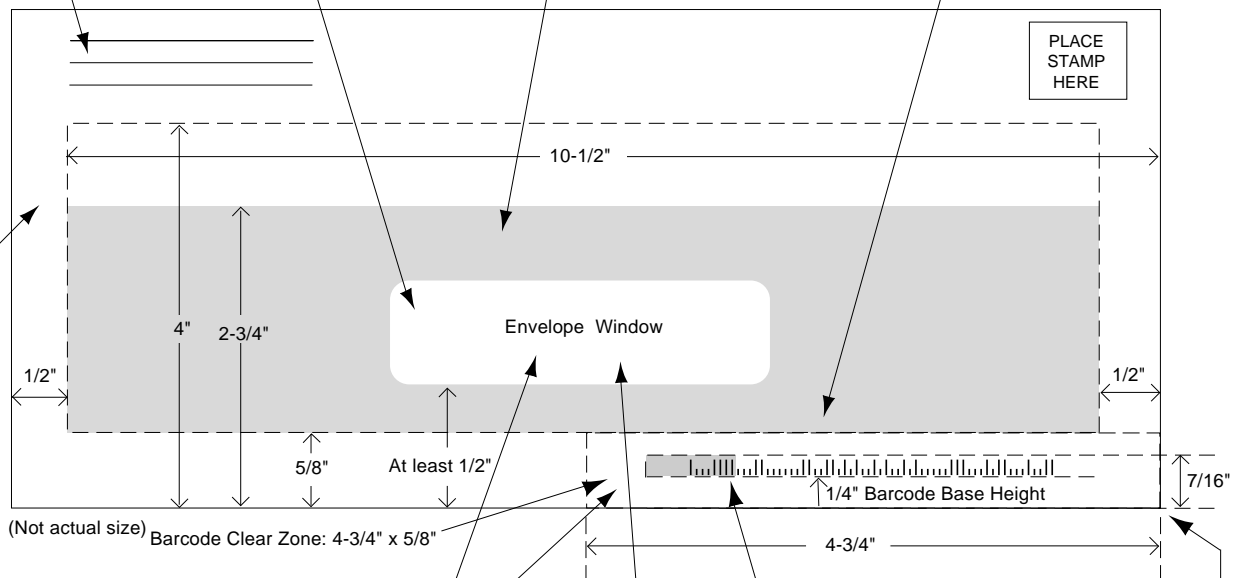- From 5/8" above bottom edge to 2-3/4" above the bottom edge of the mailpiece (C830.1).

Character Height: See C830.2.

MIN MAX

Line Spacing: See C830.2.

Minimum ▬▬▬▬

Preferred ▬▬▬▬

Barcode Clear Zone: Rectangular area in lower right corner of address side of cards and letter-size mailpieces. See C830.5 for dimensions and C840.5 for reflectance standards.

PLACE STAMP HERE

10-1/2"

4" 2-3/4"

1/2"

Envelope Window

1/2"

5/8" At least 1/2"

1/4" Barcode Base Height

7/16"

(Not actual size) Barcode Clear Zone: 4-3/4" x 5/8"

4-3/4"

Pieces Prepared With Delivery Point Barcodes (C840)

Barcode Location: DPBC either within address block or within barcode clear zone in lower right corner of mailpiece (C840.2).

Address Block Barcode: (C840.2) Within address block (shown by dashed lines) must be:
- Rightmost bar—more than 1/2" from right edge of the mailpiece.
- Leftmost bar—less than 10-1/2" from right edge, more than 1/2" from the left edge.
- Top of each bar—less than 4" from bottom edge of mailpiece.
- Bottom line in address block including barcode—at least 5/8" from bottom edge of mailpiece.

Envelope Window: 1/8"—minimum clear space between barcode and right and left edges of window. 1/25"—minimum clear space between barcode and top and bottom edges of window. Clear space must be maintained when insert is moved to its full limits in each direction within envelope (C840.2).

POSTNET Barcode Location: Leftmost bar between 3-1/2" and 4-1/4" from right edge (C840.2).

Barcode Window: If the barcode is printed on an insert to appear through a window in the lower right corner, see C840.2. For barcode placement and window dimensions, see C840.7.